

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-11, 13-15, 17-22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Yoritsugu et al.* (JP 10-126614 A).

Claims 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Yoritsugu et al.* in view of *Nakai et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,539,523).

Claim 23 has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have amended each of independent claims 1, 10 and 24 by incorporating the features of objected-to claim 23 into each of claims 1, 10 and 24. Also, Applicants have canceled claims 22 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-11, 13-21 and 24 remain pending in this application for further consideration.

All Claims Define Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-11, 13-15, 17-22 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Yoritsugu et al.*, and claims 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Yoritsugu et al.* in view of *Nakai et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for at least the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of independent claims 1, 10 and 24 becomes moot by incorporating the features of objected-to claim 23 into each of claim 1, 10 and 24 because claim 23 has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Accordingly,

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 10 and 24, as presently-amended, are in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1, 10 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is thus respectfully requested. Claims 2, 4-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15 and 17-21 are also in condition for allowance at least because of their dependencies from each of independent claims 1 and 10, as well as the Office Action's indication of allowable subject matter.

With no other rejection pending, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-2, 4-11, and 13-21 and 24 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

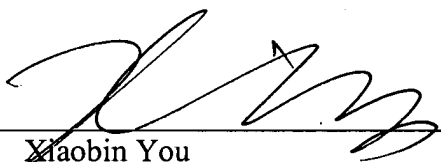
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under

37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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